synergies between sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, BIMST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand-Economic Cooperation) an Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS).

**Census of SSIs**

3079. SHRIMATI S.G. IDIRA: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a third census of Small Scale Industries has been conducted;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The Third Census of SSIs has been launched during October-November, 2002 all over the country through the State/UT Directorates of Industries (SDIs). The SSI units permanently registered till 31.3.2001 are covered on complete enumeration basis and the unregistered SSI units are covered on sample basis in a few selected villages and urban blocks. As per the latest reports received from the SDIS, data collection work has been completed in all the States except Karnataka, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. The findings of Third Census have not been brought out for want of completion of data collection work in these three States.

**Mutual Credit Gurantee Scheme for SSIs**

3080. SHRI RAMAMUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are finalizing a plan for introduction of Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for SSIs;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The government of India has requested

the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Small Industries (CGTSI) to operationalise the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS). The scheme aims to provide collateral free loans under which CGTSI gives counter guarantee to Mutual Credit Guarantee Funds set up by Industry Associations in respect of credit availed by their member small scale industrial units from the dedicated banks. The CGTSI has already started consultations with industry associations seeking their interest in setting up the MCGS.

**Reservation policy for SSIs**

3081. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is not contradictory to carry on with the reservation policy for the SSIs after removal of restrictions on import of a majority of items;

(b) whether such reservation is coming in the way of exports of some of the commodities; and

(c) if so, whether Government are going to review the reservation policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) While the removal of Quantative Restrictions (QRs) on imports has implied greater integration of the Indian economy with the world, it is necessary that in the transition period employment, balanced regional growth and utilization of local resources by local entrepreneurs is promoted through support to SSIs. This is sought to be achieved through the policies and programmes for the Sector. In addition, the policy on reservation for exclusive manufacture in the SSI Sector also permits manufacture of reserved items by non-SSI units in the country with an export obligation of 50%.

(b) SSI Sector continues to contribute about 35% of national exports. A large number of measures have been put in place by Government to support the SSI units in this endeavor. Based on consultations with stakeholders, Government has also been enhancing the investment ceiling to Rs. 5.00 Crores in respect of items with high export orientation/potential.